Clwydian Planning

Green Infrastructure Statement

Smelt Farm, Ffrwd Road, Ffrith, Wrexham

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Introduction

This Green Infrastructure Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the conversion of a redundant agricultural outbuilding at Smelt Farm, Ffrwd Road, Ffrith, Wrexham, to form a single residential dwelling.

The proposal involves the reuse and conversion of an existing former shippon and dairy building located within an established farmstead. The development has been designed to retain the rural character of the site whilst securing the long-term future of a redundant agricultural structure through sensitive adaptation and enhancement.

The statement demonstrates how the proposal aligns with the principles of Green Infrastructure by protecting existing environmental assets, making efficient use of previously developed land within the farm complex, and providing opportunities for biodiversity and landscape enhancement.

Existing Green Infrastructure Assets

The application site forms part of a traditional rural farmstead surrounded by agricultural land and established countryside features. Existing green infrastructure assets include boundary hedgerows, grassed areas, mature vegetation and the wider network of fields and habitats that characterise the surrounding landscape.

The site has historically functioned as part of a working farm and remains visually connected to the surrounding countryside. The applicants have continued to maintain the farmstead and associated boundaries, ensuring that hedgerows, fences and watercourses remain in good condition despite the cessation of agricultural activity.

The existing building occupies a previously developed footprint within the farmyard and does not require the loss of agricultural land, mature trees or significant landscape features.

Green Infrastructure Approach

The proposal embraces the core principle of sustainable development through the reuse of an existing rural building rather than the construction of a new dwelling elsewhere within the countryside.

By retaining the majority of the existing structure, the development minimises the consumption of new materials and reduces the environmental impacts associated with demolition and new-build construction. The conversion secures the continued maintenance and occupation of the building, preventing deterioration and contributing positively to the appearance and management of the wider farmstead.

The residential curtilage will remain modest in scale and confined to the existing farmyard area. This approach ensures that the development remains closely related to the established building group and avoids unnecessary encroachment into the surrounding countryside.

Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancements

The proposal includes a number of measures that will provide environmental and visual benefits.

Redundant structures within the farmyard, including the Dutch barn and storage shed, will be removed, reducing visual clutter and improving the overall appearance of the site. The retention and repair of the former piggery, where practical, will preserve an element of the site's agricultural heritage.

Areas surrounding the converted dwelling will be landscaped and grassed, creating a well-managed setting that integrates naturally with the wider rural environment. Existing boundary features will be retained wherever possible, helping to maintain ecological connectivity and landscape character.

The use of traditional materials, including natural Welsh slate roofing, timber windows and a rendered external finish, will contribute positively to the visual quality of the farmstead and reinforce local distinctiveness.

Opportunities exist for biodiversity enhancement through the incorporation of bird nesting boxes and bat roosting features within the converted building, together with the retention of existing vegetation around the site.

Climate Resilience and Sustainability

The development represents a sustainable form of rural development through the reuse of an existing building and associated infrastructure.

The dwelling will be upgraded to modern standards of thermal performance through improved insulation to floors, walls and roof, reducing energy consumption and improving long-term efficiency. Opportunities for low-carbon heating technologies will also be explored as part of the detailed design process. The proposal makes efficient use of existing access arrangements and hardstanding areas, avoiding the need for significant new infrastructure works or land take.

Conclusion

The proposed conversion of the redundant agricultural building at Smelt Farm will retain and enhance the site's existing green infrastructure assets whilst delivering a sustainable and appropriate form of rural development.

The scheme protects the character of the countryside, reuses an existing building, retains important landscape features and provides opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. Through careful design and limited intervention, the proposal will contribute positively to the environmental quality of the site and support the long-term stewardship of the wider farmstead.